



## Greater Yellowstone Coalition

*People protecting the lands, waters, and wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, now and for future generations.*

January 10, 2013

Dear Chairman Welborn and members of the House Fish Wildlife and Parks Committee,

This afternoon your committee will consider H.B. 31 which proposes to set a maximum objective of 250 wolves for the entire state, eliminates the ability to manage wolves by individual districts, and allows the use of electronic calls for hunting wolves. We ask that you oppose H.B. 31 for the below reasons:

1. This bill undermines Montana's wolf management plan which was developed through a collaborative process that included hunters, ranchers, conservationists and many others. Montana's wolf management plan works and has a solid track record of adaptive wolf management. Montana's wolf plan already allows for more or less aggressive management actions. In 2012, MFWP set aggressive management into action with no quotas throughout most of the state, the addition of trapping, and an increase in lethal removal of wolves to reduce livestock conflicts.
2. H.B. 31 sets an artificial cap on the number of wolves in Montana by setting a maximum population at 250. This will require FWP to continue intensively (and expensively) monitoring the wolf population to ensure the population remains securely recovered and would mandate a reduction of the wolf population by nearly 75%. This number has no basis in sound biology, recovery criteria for wolves, or Montana's Citizen-Stakeholder Wolf Management Plan.
3. This bill would strip Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks of their ability to make sound management decisions for wolves around Montana by eliminating wolf management units (WMU's). Use of WMU's with management quotas is vital to Montana's wolf management and allows managers to target actions that meet local needs.
4. This bill would allow electronic calls for wolf hunting. Electronic calling cannot be considered ethical and fair chase. Montanans have a long history of striving to achieve fair chase and uphold the Montana tradition of high personal ethics while hunting. Electronic calls go against this tradition.
5. This bill sets a legislated bag limit and allows hunters to kill up to 5 wolves per license. Purchase of individual licenses for wolves helps fund the wolf management program. Every wolf that is killed in Montana should have a license purchased that helps fund wildlife conservation in the state.

State management of wolves is still within the 5-year status review period under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The above changes would drastically alter the approved Citizen-Stakeholder Wolf Management Plan and jeopardize state management of wolves. Wolf management is tenuous and high

profile, but Montana has adapted its management of the species with a learn-as-you-go approach that has proven successful. I urge you to vote no on H.B. 31 and allow MFWP to continue to make sound decisions for the future of wolves.

Sincerely,

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Wildlife Program Manager  
Greater Yellowstone Coalition